



Study raises questions about South Mtn. Freeway

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A newly released traffic study shows the proposed South Mountain Freeway would ease congestion in Ahwatukee Foothills, but it doesn't pretend to be a cure-all for Valley freeway problems.

Some members of the South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team say the study, which indicates a small drop in heavily congested areas if the freeway is built, raises concerns over just how worthwhile the project is.

Tim Tait, [Arizona](#) Department of Transportation's community relations director, told the group Thursday that the freeway, "is not the solution." But added, "There is no one solution to the freeway problem. This is what we believe is part of the overall solution."

The South Mountain Freeway would run along the Pecos Road alignment and cut through South Mountain Park, connecting to Interstate 10 at 55th Avenue.

The report by HDR [Engineering](#) projected traffic in 2030 if the freeway were built and if it were not.

Without the freeway, 36 percent of all Valley freeway traffic in the morning along the studied routes would experience the highest, or worst, traffic levels. With the freeway, 32 percent of morning freeway traffic would experience the same type of congestion, the study showed. The study mapped the effect on all the Valley's major freeways.

"There's really not that big of a difference," said John Rodriguez of Ahwatukee, who is on the South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team.

Though the projections still showed the highest levels at several spots, the newly built freeway stretch would likely reduce the amount of time drivers were stuck in that congestion, said Amy Edwards, HDR project manager.

The freeway would also help "redistribute traffic from arterial streets," Edwards said.

Average daily traffic on Chandler Boulevard between 24th Street and 32nd Street would be 36 percent less in 2030 than it would if the freeway were not built, the projections showed. Team members said they used City of Phoenix projections in the traffic studies.

Ahwatukee resident James Garnand, who lives along the proposed freeway path, said he doesn't think the freeway will "help us a lot" in the village.

Advisory team member Michael Goodman said it's hard to predict traffic flows because the group doesn't know all of neighboring Gila River Indian Community's development plans.

"You continue denying the existence of GRIC," Goodman said.

Tait said ADOT invited a representative from the Gila River Indian Community to speak at the meeting, but the person declined to speak.

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I doubt that any of the Ahwatukee members of the advisory team would agree with anything that has to do with the South Mountain Freeway. They don't want it built. More excuses and roadblocks from the advisory committee.

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